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LETTER DATED 1 MARCH 2000 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to submit herewith the press communiqué on the Arusha Summit on Burundi held on 21 February 2000 in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the communiqué circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Daudi N. MWAKAWAGO
Ambassador

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Annex

Press communiqué issued on 21 February 2000 by the Office of the Chairman of the Arusha Summit on Burundi

At the invitation of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda and President Benjamin William Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Arusha Initiative on the Burundi Peace Process, respectively, Presidents Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, and Major Pierre Buyoya of Burundi, and George ole Saitoti, Vice-President of Kenya, met in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, on 21 February 2000 to deliberate on the current political and security situation obtaining in Burundi and the way forward in facilitating the Burundi peace negotiations.

Participating also in the Summit were Michel Louis, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium; Peter Main, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs responsible for Africa of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and Charles Josselin, Minister of International Cooperation and Development of France.

The Summit was also attended by Salim Ahmed Salim, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and the representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ambassador Berhanu Dinka, as well as other dignitaries from various countries and organizations.

The Arusha Summit reviewed the political and security situation in Burundi and noted with regret that the security situation, in particular, is deteriorating further as fighting still continues, claiming the lives of innocent people and wanton destruction of property.

The Arusha Summit recalled the decisions of the Eighth Arusha Regional Summit on Burundi regarding the immediate dismantling of the regroupment camps and noted that, despite the fact that the Government of Burundi had made a public statement that it had disbanded 11 camps, the decision of the Summit was to immediately disband all of them. In this regard, the Summit called upon the Government of Burundi to take appropriate measures accordingly.

The Facilitator, Nelson Mandela, briefed the Summit on the inter-sessional activities he had undertaken since December 1999 to date. The Summit was informed that he had met the leader of the Government of Burundi, Major Pierre Buyoya; the Speaker of the National Assembly, Leonce Ngendakumana; and other leaders of the parties to the conflict. The outcome of all these meetings showed signs of renewed commitment to restoring peace and stability in Burundi as soon as possible.

The Arusha Summit noted with satisfaction that within the short period since he had assumed his duties, the Facilitator had done a commendable job. In this regard, the Summit undertook to give maximum assistance to the Facilitator to enable him to accomplish this noble task. It reiterated its firm position that there was no alternative to a negotiated settlement and called upon the

negotiating parties to take the interests of the Burundi nation to heart and reach a peace agreement in order to foster national understanding and promote socio-economic development.

The Summit further underscored the importance of political goodwill to all the stakeholders in the Burundi conflict through the Arusha Initiative of the Burundi Peace Process. In this regard, the Summit urged all the stakeholders to seriously negotiate in the spirit of give and take so as to realize a lasting peaceful settlement to the Burundi conflict.

The Summit applauded the moral and material support given to the Burundi peace negotiations by the international community. It called for further support to the negotiations until the conclusion of the negotiation process.

The Summit expressed its profound appreciation to the Government and the people of the United Republic of Tanzania for having shouldered the burden of about half a million refugees from Burundi. It furthermore appealed to the international community to provide assistance to the United Republic of Tanzania so as to enable it to meet the increasingly heavy burden of refugees who were seeking refuge in the country.

At the conclusion of the one-day Summit, the Leaders expressed their gratitude to the President, the Government and the people of the United Republic of Tanzania for the warm reception accorded to all the delegations and for having successfully hosted the Summit on Burundi.